



Grade 5

Unit 1 | Digital Components

Personal Narratives: Let Me Tell You a Story

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Contents

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Digital Components

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Paragraph about a Paragraph

Writers often organize good paragraphs using a common set of guidelines. First, writers include a topic sentence to introduce the topic or key idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence tells what the paragraph will be about.

Next, writers include supporting sentences to explain the topic or key idea. Writers usually include at least three to five sentences to give the reader supporting details and facts about the topic or key idea. Including interesting facts and details helps make the paragraph informative and interesting to read. It is important that the sentences stick to the topic.

Finally, writers end the paragraph with a concluding sentence, or their final thought about the topic or key idea. Using these guidelines can be helpful to writing a clear and informative paragraph.

When you write a narrative, the topic or key idea introduced in the topic sentence is often the event you are writing about.

My First Camping Trip

I'll never forget the first time I went camping. We drove several hours to the wilds of Pennsylvania. My sister and I squirmed and chattered in the back set for the whole drive. Our campsite was right next to a beautiful lake, and I was really looking forward to swimming and taking out a canoe. But as soon as we set up our tent, a torrential rainstorm began. It didn't stop pouring all weekend, and my family's first outdoor adventure was spent cooped up in a tent playing gin rummy. I did not experience much nature, but I did have fun and became very skilled at gin rummy. I'm looking forward to camping again and hope the weather cooperates next time.

Passage from “The First Real San Giving Day”

With new resolve and colored dittos in hand, I approached Abuela that night as she sat at the kitchen table... “Abuela, do you know what Thanksgiving is really all about— what it really means?” “¿Qué?” she said without looking up from her notebook. “Thanksgiving,” I repeated. She looked up at me blankly, and I realized she couldn’t understand “Thanksgiving” in my properly pronounced English. So I blurted it out the way most Cubans pronounced it, as if it were the name of a saint: “San Giving, Abuela, San Giving.” “*Oh, el día de San Giving.* Yes, what?” she asked, and I began explaining: “It was because the Pilgrims and Indians became friends”... “What are *pilgreems*? And those black *sombreros*?” she asked, looking over my dittos, “We didn’t wear those *en Cuba*.”

Think as You Read

Think as You Read to improve understanding!

As you read personal narratives, think about the following:

- pictures you are forming in your mind
(mental images)
- predictions about what might happen next
- passages you like a lot
- passages you find confusing
- repeating ideas or themes
- context clues that help you understand new words and phrases

Guidelines for Listening and Commenting

- 1.** Give the reader your attention and respect.
- 2.** Keep your comments positive.
- 3.** Comment on specific language in the narrative.

Passage from “The First Real San Giving Day”

“There’s only five days left. I have to start cooking, no?” “Abuela,” I whined, “I don’t know what to buy or how to make anything. What are we going to do?” “No worry, we can have pork and black beans like we always have—maybe some Cubaroni? That’s *americano* enough, no?” she said, genuinely trying to appease me. “I guess so, Abuela, but it’s not the same,” I said.

Feedback Sentence Frames

The words _____ really helped me form a clear mental image of _____.

I liked when you used the words _____ because _____.

The words _____ really helped me understand that you were feeling _____.

I thought it was very funny when you wrote _____ because _____.

Personification Sentences

- 1.** (a) The bride danced with her father.
(b) The moonlight danced on the ocean.

- 2.** (a) The coach yelled angrily at the kids who disrupted practice.
(b) The cars honked angrily at the man who stood in the middle of the road.

- 3.** (a) The pilot flies above the clouds to avoid storms.
(b) Time flies whenever I get together with my best friend.

Passage from “The First Real San Giving Day”

I glared over the cereal box at my brother, Greg. And when he asked me to pass the milk, I ignored him. He jumped up and grabbed it, whistling the whole time. Then, with great enthusiasm, he started quizzing my dad about a birdhouse he was building. Greg couldn't care less about Dad's carpentry projects! I kept glaring.

Feedback Sentence Frames

When you wrote _____, it seemed like I was seeing the moment in slow motion.

The words _____ really helped me understand all that happened in your moment.

The detail about _____ created a clear picture in my mind of _____.

Showing and Telling Passages

Passage 1 (Showing)

The next day at recess, I asked some of the American kids in class what they had for Thanksgiving.

“Turkey—what else, dummy? With stuffing,” Jimmy Dawson told me.

“What’s stuffing? ” I asked.

He burst out laughing, thinking I was kidding: “It’s the stuff you put in the turkey,” he tried to explain.

“Oh, you mean like candy in a piñata?” I proposed.

“No, no, dummy . . . with bread and celery and other stuff—that’s why they call it stuffing,” he tried to clarify.

“Oh . . . okay.” I pretended to understand exactly what he meant.

Showing and Telling Passages

Passage 2 (Telling)

The next day at recess, I asked some of the American kids in class what they had for Thanksgiving. Jimmy Dawson told me he had turkey and stuffing. I pretended to understand what stuffing was.

5 Simple Rules for Writing Dialogue

1. Quotation marks are placed before the first word of a quote and after the punctuation that follows the last word.

Example:

“Give me a taste,” Bella said.

Bella said, “Give me a taste.”

2. When the tag (the name of the speaker and the speaking verb) follows the quote, it ends in a period. When the tag precedes the quote, it ends in a comma.

Example:

“Give me a taste,” Bella said.

Bella said, “Give me a taste.”

3. The punctuation that ends a quote is written *inside* the quotation marks.

Example:

“May I have a taste?” Bella asked.

Bella demanded, “Give me a taste!”

5 Simple Rules for Writing Dialogue (continued)

4. When the tag follows a quote, quotes that do not end in an exclamation point or question mark end in a comma instead of a period.

Example:

“Give me a taste,” Bella said.

5. When writing dialogue between two or more speakers, begin a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.

Example:

Bella jealously stared at Jeremy’s ice cream. She had not had ice cream in weeks. “Give me a taste,” she said.

“I paid for this. Go buy your own,” Jeremy answered.

“Pleeease,” Bella begged. Jeremy did not answer for a few seconds. He looked back and forth between his ice cream cone and Bella.

“Fine,” Jeremy conceded, handing Bella the cone. “You can have one lick, but that’s it.”

Feedback Sentence Frames

When _____ said _____ I had a clear picture in my mind of _____.

Your dialogue between _____ and _____ reminded me of the way I talk to _____.

Your choice of the verb _____ instead of *said* helped me understand clearly how the line _____ was spoken.

Personal Narrative Writing Strategies

- **Showing, not telling through:**
 - strong adjectives and verbs
 - dialogue
 - detailed moments and action
 - describing emotions through behavior
 - sensory descriptions using all five senses
- **Personification**
- **A strong perspective supported by evidence**
- **A logical sequence of events**
- **A specific tone**
- **Similes and metaphor**

Sample “Free Write” Paragraph

My name is short and sweet: Marc. It’s just four letters and one syllable. Two of my best friends when I was a kid were Zachary and Deborah, and I used to wish I had a more poetic-sounding name like they did. But I came to appreciate my name. It rhymes with lots of words, like shark, park, dark, quark, so it’s easy for me to write little poems or limericks about myself. I also have a Hebrew name, Moshe—Hebrew for Moses. When I watch *The Ten Commandments* or *The Prince of Egypt*, I feel proud that I was named after a heroic biblical figure. I also think I was given an “M” name after a great great uncle I never met—Mayer. I’ve been meaning to ask family about him, but haven’t really gotten around to it.

“Free Write” Brainstorming Questions

- How was your name chosen?
- Were you named after a relative?
- Are you ever called by a name different from the one on your birth certificate?
- Have people mispronounced your name?
- Do you know what your name means?
- Can you write your name in another language?
- Is your name important to you?
- Have you ever thought of changing your name?

Evidence of the Injustice of Segregation

Quote from the text	Evidence of injustice of segregation

Feedback Sentence Frames

Your narrative taught me something about you I didn't know. The words(s) _____ taught me that _____.

Your narrative taught me something interesting about what your name means to you. The words _____ taught me that _____.

The visual element added to the meaning of your narrative. It showed me that _____.

When you described _____ with the words _____, I could really picture it in my mind.

Feedback Sentence Frames

- 1.** _____ was a strong piece of evidence supporting your perspective that _____.

- 2.** The words _____ helped me form a strong mental image of _____.

Museum of Giant Rocks Passages

- 1.** I am quite convinced that the reopening of the Museum of Giant Rocks will not end well. In 1990, on the museum's opening day, the fasteners and bolts that held the giant rocks in place came loose, sending huge stones rolling in every direction, crushing cars and barely missing a crowd of people. The authorities immediately closed down the museum but then reopened it two years later. On the second opening day, the exact same thing occurred. Since then, the museum has reopened seven times, each time with the same results. Today, again, the museum is scheduled to reopen after being rebuilt by the same architects and builders who have worked on it from the start.

Museum of Giant Rocks Passages

- 2.** Really? Reopen the Museum of Giant Rocks? What a brilliant idea by the mayor and his advisors. Because every town is better off with smashed storefronts, crushed cars, and citizens running for their lives from huge boulders rolling down the middle of Main Street.

Museum of Giant Rocks Passages

3. I squeezed my lucky penny in my pocket as we pulled into the parking lot of the Museum of Giant Rocks. I needed all the luck I could get. Rocks fall, rocks roll, rocks bounce. Rocks give people concussions! Who had the crazy idea of reopening this museum of mayhem? I hugged the wall and tried to keep my legs from shaking as my dad dragged me to the first exhibit. Let me wrestle a bear, let me juggle chainsaws. Anything but this.

Feedback Sentence Frames

Your narrative taught me something about you I didn't know.

The words(s) _____ taught me that _____.

Your narrative taught me something interesting about what your name means to you. The words _____ taught me that _____.

The visual element added to the meaning of your narrative. It showed that me that _____.

When you described _____ with the words _____, I could really picture it in my mind.

Story Sentences

Story V

The young panda was hungry.

She began climbing a tree for a bamboo snack.

She looked down from the tree and became too frightened to move.

Papa panda climbed up the tree and helped the young panda down.

Finally, he climbed the tree and brought a bamboo snack down to the young panda.

Story Sentences

Story W

Last year, I decided to memorize the definition of every single word in the dictionary.

In order to accomplish this, I began spending a half hour every morning reading the dictionary.

After two weeks, I still only knew about ten new words.

Then my uncle reminded me the whole point of a dictionary is that you don't need to memorize the definition of every single word.

Now I just try to learn one new word every day.

Story Sentences

Story X

I read that if you start lifting a calf every day starting right after it's born, eventually you'll be able to lift a cow.

When our cow had a new calf, I decided to see if what I read is true.

Therefore, every morning before school, I went out to the barn and lifted up the calf.

But no one wanted to sit next to me on the bus because they said I smelled like cow manure.

After that, I decided lifting a cow was not so important after all.

Story Sentences

Story Y

Bella did not pay much attention to the homeless people in her town.

In autumn, Bella lost her sweater at school and was cold walking home without it.

Bella then began to worry about how the homeless people would keep warm when winter came.

So Bella organized a drive at school to collect winter clothing.

Bella's favorite holiday memory is handing out coats and gloves to the homeless on Thanksgiving.

Story Sentences

Story Z

Zolflik of the planet Qrrrrn was determined to conquer Earth.

She appealed to the high council of Qrrrrn for permission to launch a massive attack on Earth.

The high council of Qrrrrn denied her permission.

Zolflik set out in a small space ship to conquer Earth all by herself.

After a few hours, she became homesick and returned to Qrrrrn.

“My Story” Details Chart

Detail Rosa Parks Included	Quote from Text	Infer Why the Detail Was Included
1.		
2.		

Think as You Read

Think as You Read to improve understanding!

As you read personal narratives, think about the following:

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- predictions about what might happen next
- passages you like a lot
- passages you find confusing
- repeating ideas or themes
- context clues that help you understand new words and phrases

Feedback Sentence Frames

The words(s) _____ really helped me imagine the moment leading up to your surprise.

When you wrote _____, I understood why the surprise was so unexpected.

I learned something new about you from your narrative. The words _____ taught me that _____.

When you described _____ with the words _____, I could really picture it in my mind.

Writing _____ was a great way to show _____ rather than tell.

Passages from “A View of the Earth”

- 1.** The other thing I noticed was that I could feel the warmth of the sun. We were about to come into a day pass. And the light in space, when you're in the sunlight, is the brightest, whitest, purest light I have ever experienced, and it brings with it warmth. I could feel that coming, and I actually started feeling optimistic.

Passages from “A View of the Earth”

2. And that moment changed my relationship with the Earth. Because for me the Earth had always been a kind of a safe haven, you know, where I could go to work or be in my home or take my kids to school. But I realized it really wasn't that. It really is its own spaceship. And I had always been a space traveler. All of us here today, even tonight, we're on this spaceship Earth, amongst all the chaos of the universe, whipping around the sun and around the Milky Way galaxy.

Passages from “A View of the Earth”

- 3.** And we turned the corner to come down our block, and I could see my neighbors were outside. They had decorated my house, and there were American flags everywhere. And my neighbor across the street was holding a pepperoni pizza and a six-pack of beer, two things that unfortunately we still cannot get in space.



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